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MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT HANDBOOK FOR OFFICIALS AND PRACTITIONERS

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

1. In its work programme in shipping, ports and multimodal transport, which the Standing Committee on Developing Services Sectors: Fostering Competitive Services Sectors in Developing Countries: Shipping, established at its first session, the Committee decided, *inter alia*, to "elaborate a reference document (MT Handbook) for officials and practitioners, setting out the basic concepts of multimodal transport, problems and pitfalls, possible solutions and the major issues to be tackled by the private and public sectors in the process of developing multimodal transport in a country."[1]

2. The annexed draft MT Handbook (which has not been formally edited) has been prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat in order to assist the Committee in this task. It draws, *inter alia*, on material prepared by technicians for use in UNCTAD's TRAINMAR courses on multimodal transport which has been used and updated since 1984. This draft has been produced only in a limited number of copies under symbol UNCTAD/SDD/MT/Misc.1.

3. The Handbook is intended as a reference document for all those involved in modern multimodal transport, whether from governments or from the private sector. It offers them an open-ended and non-exhaustive list of ways and means to improve the competitiveness of international trade of their country, by:

* improving the quality and reducing the associated costs of international transport; and
* reducing any possible transaction cost, adapting commercial practices to international standards and removing any unnecessary trade barriers, within the economic, social and political context of that country.

4. The Standing Committee is requested to give its views and comments to the secretariat as to the suggested contents. The draft is submitted in "skeleton form" only and the Standing Committee is requested to indicate whether it finds the basic thrust acceptable and where improvements and/or additions may be made. It is suggested that in many cases it should suffice to make reference to other sources rather than attempting the impossible task of reproducing all available information in one volume.

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1 *Report of the Standing Committee on Developing Services Sectors: Fostering Competitive Services Sectors in Developing Countries - Shipping on its first session* (TD/B/CN.4/13), annex I, B., para. 9, p. 15.